

DATE: April 24, 2014

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Agreement – Youth Opportunity Initiative

Executive Summary

In 2012 Durham was awarded an IBM Smarter Cities consulting grant to study the issues associated with Disconnected Youth in the community and to make recommendations for a better coordinated youth services governance and delivery system. As a result of these recommendations the City of Durham, the County of Durham, and Durham Public Schools (DPS) agreed to “reframe” the initiative to “Connecting Youth” and to enter into an agreement with the Alliance for Behavioral Healthcare to provide program oversight and coordination services since it was already managing a related program under the SAMHSA Grant as well as managing the System of Care database. The Agreement contemplates the addition of two additional staff resources and will be equally funded between the City, County, and DPS.

Recommendation

That the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alliance for Behavioral Healthcare, including shared funding for staffing, to support the Youth Opportunity Initiative.

Background

In the spring of 2012 consultants from the IBM Smarter Cities grant presented a report to the community on their findings regarding the challenges faced with the large number of what were described as “disconnected youth” along with an assessment of the existing and sometimes uncoordinated resources working to provide support services. An initial recommendation contained within the report was to modify initiative descriptors to focus on “connecting youth” instead of the more negative disconnected youth label. A significant recommendation of the report was designating an agency or unit of local government with overall coordinating and data management responsibilities to be supported by staffing resources. Following the release of the report, leadership from Durham Public Schools, Durham County, and the City of Durham evaluated options and determined it better to contract with an organization already working on these issues that had access to existing data resources rather than create a new organizational entity and data set. The Alliance for Behavioral Healthcare (formerly The Durham Center) was selected because of its extensive work as a sub-recipient of a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support “BECOMING”, a mental health program targeting high-risk 16-21 year olds in Durham County who have

mental health challenges and have become disconnected from services and supports that would support their transition to adulthood. In addition, the Alliance for Behavioral Healthcare supports the system of care database system for Durham County. Staffing resources to support the Connecting Youth initiative will include a Youth Services Director and a Youth Opportunity Coordinator who will be employees of the Alliance for Behavioral Healthcare. The agreement provides for a 12 month contract that can be extended an additional 12 months.

Alternatives

The issues of connecting disconnected youth in the community have been an important priority for over a decade. Alternatives considered included establishing a new non-profit or governmental department or agency; however the costs to do so are substantially higher and would take longer to implement.

Financial Impact

City of Durham contribution of \$66,000 per year will be matched by Durham County and Durham Public Schools and is included in the current budget.

SBDE Requirements

Not applicable.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Agreement